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SUBJECT: EU LEADERS ENDORSE "STOCKHOLM PROGRAM" OF
JHA ACTIVITIES FOR 2010-2014

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SUMMARY

1. EU leaders in the December 10-11 European Council adopted a new multi-annual program for EU activities related to justice, freedom and security (justice and home affairs). The so-called "Stockholm Program" for 2010-2014 tabled by the Commission and shaped under the Swedish Presidency is intended to provide the reference framework for future legal initiatives and other measures promoting EU citizenship and fundamental rights, fostering cooperation among judicial authorities, easing access to justice throughout the EU, and strengthening cooperation in law enforcement, border management, and disaster management. END SUMMARY.

2. EU leaders recognized in the conclusions from their European Council meeting that five years after the Hague Program, it was "time for the Union to review its policy to effectively meet the new challenges" in justice and home affairs (JHA). Priority for the coming years (2010-2014) "shall be to focus on the interests and needs of the citizens," the leaders stated. "The challenge will be to ensure respect for fundamental freedoms and integrity, while guaranteeing security in Europe." It was "of paramount importance that law enforcement measures and measures to safeguard individual rights, the rule of law and international protection rules are coherent and mutually reinforcing."

3. The Stockholm program focuses on the following main priorities, listed in the European Council document:

Begin text

-- Promoting citizenship and fundamental rights: European citizenship must become a tangible reality. The area of freedom, security and justice must above all be a single area in which fundamental rights are protected. Respect for the human person and human dignity and for the other rights set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights are core values. For example, the exercise of

these freedoms and citizens' privacy must be preserved beyond national borders, especially by protecting personal data.

-- A Europe of law and justice: The achievement of a European area of justice must be consolidated. Priority should be given to mechanisms that facilitate access to justice, so that people can enforce their rights throughout the Union. Cooperation between public professionals in the area of justice and their training should be improved, and resources should be mobilized to eliminate barriers to the recognition of legal acts in other Member States.

-- Europe that protects: An internal security strategy should be developed in order to improve security in the Union and thus protect the lives and safety of European citizens. It should tackle organised crime, terrorism and other threats. The strategy should also aim at strengthening cooperation in law enforcement, border management, civil protection, disaster management as well as criminal judicial cooperation.

-- Access to Europe in a globalized world: Access to Europe for businessmen, tourists, students, scientists, workers, persons in need of international protection and others having a legitimate interest to access EU territory has to be made more efficient. At the same time, the Union and its Member States have to guarantee security for its citizens. Integrated border management and visa policies should be construed to serve these goals.

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-- A Europe of responsibility, solidarity and partnership in migration and asylum matters: The development of a forward-looking and comprehensive European migration policy, based on solidarity and responsibility remains a key policy objective. Well-managed migration can be beneficial to all stakeholders and the EU should work towards flexible admission systems and a closer match between immigration and the needs of the EU labor market. The Global Approach to Migration and the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum provides a clear basis for further development in this field. The objective to establish a common asylum system remains and people in need of protection must be

EU governments to decide on asylum requests in countries of origin and transit (e.g. at EU embassies or consular posts in North African countries). Sweden was also forced to scale down some of its ambitions on specific points in the draft, e.g., by conceding that one third of police forces and half of judges already involved in cross-country cooperation may benefit from EU training, whereas the initial goal was to provide training to 50 percent of law enforcement personnel.

16. COMMENT continued. A key feature of the implementation of the Stockholm program will be the increased role of the European Parliament (EP) in the adoption of new legislative instruments. This will apply to areas such as police and judicial cooperation for which EU decision-making procedures were entirely in the hands of Member State governments until the recent entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The EP has been calling for tighter mechanisms to ensure the protection of personal data, especially when such

data may be transferred to non-EU countries such as the U.S. The Swedish Presidency ensured that specific language appears in the Stockholm Program directing the negotiation with the United States of a binding agreement on data protection principles

MURRAY